

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received JUL 23 1987

date entered AUG 20 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic N/A

and or common Nichols Farms Historic District

2. Location

street & number Center Road, 1681-1944 Huntington Turnpike
5-34 Priscilla Place, 30-172 Shelton Road NA not for publication

city, town Trumbull ☒ vicinity of Nichols

state CT code 09 county Fairfield code 001

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | NA | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Trumbull Land Records, Town Clerk, Town Hall

street & number 5866 Main Street

city, town Trumbull state CT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1987 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

59 South Prospect Street
city, town Hartford state CT

7. Description

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | 1970 - 1730 Hntgtn Tpk rear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site | 19th century - 1734, 1944 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved | date <u>Huntington Turnpike</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | | 1920s - 32-34 Priscilla Place |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Nichols Farms Historic District is a residential area located along Huntington Turnpike and Shelton Road in the southeastern corner of the Town of Trumbull. The district comprises approximately 104 acres and 140 resources. The resources are 134 buildings, one object, and five sites. There are 51 major buildings that contribute to the historic and architectural significance and 19 non-contributing outbuildings, 30 contributing outbuildings, and 34 non-contributing outbuildings. The object, contributing, is a fountain. The five sites are the Nichols Green, contributing, and four vacant parcels, non-contributing.

Of the 51 major contributing buildings, three date from the 18th century, 27 from the 19th century, and 21 from the 20th century. Their breakdown by styles is Colonial 7, Georgian 1, Federal 1, Greek Revival 14, Italianate 5, Queen Anne 3, 19th-Century Vernacular 1, Colonial Revival 8, Bungalow 1, American Four-square 1, Dutch Colonial Revival 5, Tudor Revival 3, and 20th-Century Vernacular 1.

The activity center of Nichols Farms Historic District is the intersection of Huntington Turnpike with Shelton Road and Unity Road, near the Green, churches, library, and school. Huntington Turnpike is the major north-south artery. Shelton Road branches off from it to the northeast, forming a triangular space that is the Green. The Green is the site of a small concrete monument with lettering "Town of Trumbull - 1797" and a boulder with two bronze tablets bearing the names of World War I and II soldiers. (Photograph 1) To the north of the Green is the Methodist Church, a modern building. (Photograph 2) To the south of the Green is the Episcopal Church, also a modern building. (Photograph 3) The Episcopal Church was relocated from Jerusalem Hill, two blocks south, at the time the Merritt Parkway was constructed in 1941.¹ Next door to the church is the Fairchild-Nichols Memorial Library, a public library in the Colonial Revival style donated by two of the district's old families. (Photograph 3) Nichols School, southwest of the library on Priscilla Place, is a 1-story brick building in the Colonial Revival style with a red tile roof of Spanish Colonial Revival influence. (Photograph 4)

Houses in the district are pleasantly spaced from one another along tree-lined highways, some closer to the street than others. The greatest

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density is found south of the Green along the west side of Huntington Turnpike and the north side of Priscilla Lane. (Photographs 1, 5) The oldest house in the district probably is the Andrew Nichols House, 1832 Huntington Turnpike, dating from the 18th century. (Photograph 6) It has been altered by addition of front and side porches, shingled siding, and removal of the central chimney. Other examples in the oldest group of seven are, as is the Nichols House, 5-bay central-entrance plan, with the exception of 1821 Huntington turnpike, which has four bays. Its Greek Revival portico is added and its arched attic windows are also probably a 19th-century feature. The Reuben Fairchild House, 1837 Huntington Turnpike, is a Georgian variation on the same plan, but with twin chimneys and simple Classical Revival details. (Photograph 7) The house at 74 Shelton Road with Federal semi-elliptical attic window in its 3-bay gable end toward the street completes the pre-Greek Revival style grouping in the district.

The architectural style represented in the greatest number of houses, 14, in the district is the Greek Revival, reflecting the industrial activity in the district during the period of this style's popularity.² Again, as in the case of the Colonial-era structures, the Greek Revival houses generally have been altered, but are, nonetheless, clear examples of their type.

The largest and finest of the Greek Revival houses are 1918 Huntington Turnpike and 154, 169-71, and 170-172 Shelton Road.

1918 Huntington Turnpike is impressive for the tall fluted columns of its wrap-around porch and for its cupola. (Photograph 8) On the south side elevation there is a late 19th-century 5-sided bay that is covered with fish-scale shingles. The G. B. Ambler House, 154 Shelton Road, is unusual in the district for its balustrades on both the porch and main roof lines. (Photograph 9)

The Franklin P. Ambler House, 169-171 Shelton Road, is another square house with paneled corner pilasters and fluted Doric columns for its wide porch. (Photograph 10) In contrast, the E. P. Nichols House, across the street at 170-172 Shelton Road, has Ionic columns in its porch, with the further interest that the side porch with attenuated Ionic columns is a sensitive 20th-century addition. (Photograph 11)

Some of the Greek Revival houses have Italianate features that may be original components of their construction or may be alterations. It is not always possible to separate these two sub-types; 38 Shelton Road is a case in point, where the 3-bay spacing and frieze are Greek Revival but the paneled-posts-on-pedestals of the porch are Italianate, perhaps added but perhaps original in view of the date of

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c. 1860 associated with the house. (Photograph 12) The bracketed roof overhangs of 1721 (Photograph 5) and 1727 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 1), on the other hand, clearly place them in the Italianate style. An Italianate house was built on the John B. Nichols property, 1773 Huntington Turnpike. This parcel of 40 acres is the last of the farms in Nichols Farms to remain as open land. (Photograph 13)

The Italianate style in turn was followed by the Queen Anne at the end of the 19th century, but since the period of industrial prosperity had passed by then, the rate of building activity had declined and examples of the Queen Anne style number only three. 1896 Huntington Turnpike is the largest and most spectacular; its high hipped roof and big round corner tower proclaim its identity in the imaginative, asymmetrical world of the Queen Anne. (Photograph 8)

During the 20th century, most construction in the district has been in one or another variation of the Colonial Revival style. The Dutch Colonial Revival style is well represented by five houses. 85 Shelton Road has the gambrel roof, pent roof across the first story, 5-bay facade, and classical details associated with the style. 1865 Huntington Turnpike has the flared eaves of Dutch origin and round Colonial Revival porch posts, but the relationship of the wide porch to the mass of the house and the roof, and the wide dormer in the front roof slope, suggest Bungalow influence, adding yet another combination to the many combinations of architectural styles found in the district. (Photograph 14)

Nichols Farms has one industrial building, a machine shop, at 15 Center Street on the site of a stone carriage factory. The frame building was constructed in 1917 as a community hall, has 2-over-2 windows, and is now covered with vinyl siding to resemble clapboards. It retains its original shape, mass, fenestration, and general appearance. (Photograph 15)

When the cast-iron fountain was placed on the Green in 1895, it had gadrooned basins on either side. The fountain was moved across the street to the traffic island at the intersection of Unity Road and Huntington Turnpike in 1931 and again in 1970 north to the John B. Nichols property. The bunnies now seen in the basin were added at that time. (Photograph 19) The fountain was given to the community by the Peet family.

End Notes

¹ The 1848 Episcopal edifice that stood on the corner of Jerusalem Hill (see Beers map) was a frame structure designed by Alexander Jackson Davis. (Undated letter of Elizabeth Seeley to Elmer D. Keith in Trumbull W.P.A. Census of Old Buildings folder at Connecticut Historical Society

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Library, "Mr. Harral paid Alexander Jackson Davis for the plans.") After being moved it burned in 1969, to be replaced by the present structure.

The Merritt Parkway of 1935 constitutes a major intrusion to the historic boundary of the community. The parkway splits off historic houses to its south. See district map.

²The chief industries were manufacture of saddle trees and carriages. See item 8.

Inventory

C or NC in the second column indicates whether the structure/site is considered to be Contributing or Non-Contributing to the historical and architectural significance of the district.

The source of the date given in the third column is generally indicated by the code: A = Assessor's record; SC = Report of the Trumbull Historic District Study Committee; V = visual approximation.

Center Road

| | | | | |
|----|---|------------|----|--|
| 15 | C | 1917 | A | 1-story frame shop building. 2/2 windows. On site of 19th-century stone carriage factory building. (Photograph 15) |
| 23 | C | c. 1835 | SC | George Nichols House. Greek Revival 5-bay hipped-roof house with corner pilasters and pedimented portico. |
| | C | 1915 owner | | Barn, built as blacksmith shop by man who was blacksmith for carriage factory. |
| | C | 19C | V | Barn, now connected to house. |

Huntington Turnpike

| | | | | |
|------|----|------|----|---|
| 1681 | C | 1790 | SC | 5-bay Colonial house with Colonial Revival wrap-around porch. |
| | NC | | | Garage |

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| | | | | |
|------|----|---------|----|---|
| 1698 | C | 1929 | A | Tudor Revival/Cotswold house with good integrity. |
| | C | 1929 | A | Companion garage with slate roof, like the house. |
| 1699 | C | 1923 | A | 1-story Colonial Revival house with gable-on-hip roof. |
| | NC | | | Garage. |
| 1705 | C | c. 1840 | SC | John Pardee House. Greek Revival house. Portico with fluted Ionic columns. (Photograph 5) |
| | C | 19C | V | 2-story barn. |
| 1708 | C | 1926 | A | Dutch Colonial Revival house. |
| | C | 1926 | A | Companion garage. |
| 1713 | NC | 1950 | A | Weathered-shingle Colonial Revival house with central stone chimney. (Photograph 5) |
| | NC | 1950 | A | 19th-century barn, survivor of fire that destroyed the house. |
| 1718 | C | 1928 | A | Fairchild-Nichols Memorial Library. Brick Colonial Revival building with 1½-story Tuscan tetrastyle portico. W. R. Muirhead & Son, builders. (Photograph 3) |
| 1721 | C | 1855 | A | Italianate house with arcaded wrap-around porch and paired eaves brackets. (Photograph 5) |
| | C | 19C | V | 2-story barn. |
| | NC | | | Shed. |
| | NC | | | Shed. |

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Huntington Turnpike, (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|------|----|---------|--------------|--|
| 1727 | C | c. 1855 | SC | Ira Nichols House. Italianate house with bracketed roof overhang, round colored-glass attic window, Queen Anne wrap-around porch. (Photograph 1) |
| | NC | | | Garage. |
| 1730 | NC | 1970 | A | Trinity Episcopal Church. Frame edifice with central tower and spire. (Photograph 3) |
| | C | c. 1922 | Corner-stone | Colonial Revival frame meeting hall, in rear. |
| 1734 | C | c. 1855 | SC | George E. Peet House. Episcopal Rectory. Italianate house with low hipped or flat roof. Moved back from street. |
| | C | c. 1855 | V | 2-story barn. |
| 1735 | C | 1926 | A | 2-story frame Colonial Revival house. (Photograph 1) |
| | NC | | | Garage. |
| 1741 | C | 1931 | A | 1-story Colonial Revival stucco house with segmental porch pediment and eyebrow dormer. (Photograph 1) |
| | C | 1931 | A | Companion garage. |
| 1745 | C | 1838 | A | Greek Revival house with Queen Anne addition of apsidal bay covered with imbricated shingles (Photograph 1) |
| | NC | | | Garage. |
| | C | 1895 | | Cast-iron fountain. (Photograph 19) |
| | C | | | Nichols Green. Visual and traffic center of the community. Site of monument. (Photograph 1) |

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Huntington Turnpike, (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|------|----|---------|------------------|---|
| 1773 | C | 1850 | A | John B. Nichols/Starkweather House. Nichols Improvement Association. Italianate house with wrap-around porch and hipped roof. 40 acres formerly farm, now park. (Photograph 13) |
| | NC | | | Garage. |
| 1776 | NC | 1961 | Corner- stone | Nichols United Methodist Church. Colonial Revival brick church with portico and spire. (Photograph 2) |
| | NC | 1981 | A | Brick education building. |
| 1790 | C | 1896 | A | Queen Anne house with 3-sided bay and pedimented gables. |
| | C | c. 1920 | V | Garage/shed with novelty siding. |
| 1800 | C | 1906 | A | Queen Anne shingled house with Neo- Classical Revival wrap-around porch |
| 1803 | C | 1929 | A | Colonial Revival house set well back from the road. |
| | NC | 1971 | A | Garage. |
| | NC | "New" | A | Shed. |
| 1809 | C | c. 1840 | SC | Greek Revival house with added 2-story 3-sided bay covered with imbricated shingles. |
| | NC | 1950 | A | Garage. |
| 1810 | C | 1810 | Sign on house | Hezekiah Nichols House. 5-bay cen- tral-chimney Colonial house with Colonial Revival front and side porches |
| | NC | c. 1960 | V | Garage. |
| | NC | c. 1950 | V | Shed. |

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Huntington Turnpike (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|------|----|---------|----|---|
| 1818 | C | c. 1845 | SC | Greek Revival house with paneled corner pilasters, hipped roof, and added Queen Anne porch |
| 1821 | C | c. 1815 | SC | Colonial 4-bay central-chimney house. Greek Revival entrance may be modern. Arched attic windows. |
| | NC | c. 1960 | V | Garage. |
| | NC | c. 1960 | V | Shed. |
| 1831 | NC | 19C | V | Frame gable-roofed structure with new entrance, picture window, and rear addition under construction. May have been barn or shop, now insensitively altered. (Photograph 16) |
| 1832 | C | 1750 | A | Andrew Nichols House. Colonial house covered with weathered shingles. Added ell and glazed side porch; added coved front portico. Central chimney removed. (Photograph 6) The W.P.A. Census of Old Buildings form calls this the S. W. Nichols House and gives it a date of "after 1787." |
| | C | c. 1900 | V | Garage. |
| 1837 | C | 1800 | A | Reuben Fairchild House. Georgian twin-chimney 5-bay house with shed-roofed portico, side and transom lights, semi-elliptical attic windows. (Photograph 7) |
| | NC | 1935 | A | Garage, without architectural character. |
| 1841 | NC | 1938 | A | Colonial Revival house. |
| | NC | 1938 | A | Garage. |
| | NC | 1938 | A | Shed. |
| | NC | 1938 | A | Shed. |

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Huntington Turnpike (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|------|----|-----------|-------|--|
| 1847 | NC | 1942 | A | Gable-roofed stone-and-frame house. |
| 1856 | C | 1806 | A | Woods Estate/Old Tannery Park. Trumbull Historical Society. Colonial 5-bay central-chimney house with Colonial Revival alterations and additions both exterior and interior. Now Abraham Nichols Park. |
| | C | 1806 | A | 2-story barn. |
| | C | Early 20C | V | Greenhouse. |
| | C | Early 20C | V | Shed. |
| | NC | 1973 | A | Cabin. |
| 1865 | C | 1920 | A | Dutch Colonial Revival/Bungalow house with roof that flares out over wide front porch. (Photograph 14) |
| | C | 1920 | A | Garage. |
| 1885 | C | 1859 | A | Greek Revival/Italianate house with porch posts on pedestals, rectangular windows in frieze, roof overhang, and pyramidal roof. (Photograph 14) |
| | C | 19C | V | 2-story barn. |
| 1895 | C | c. 1885 | V | Vernacular ell-shaped house with added porch in angle of the ell. |
| | C | early 20C | V | Garage. |
| 1896 | C | 1906 | A | Large Queen Anne house with corner tower. (Photograph 8) |
| | C | 1906 | A | Garage. |
| 1918 | C | 1857 | Owner | Charles Fairchild House. Greek Revival house with wrap-around porch supported by tall fluted columns. Added 5-sided bay covered with fish-scale shingles. Monitor. (Photograph 8) |

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Huntington Turnpike (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|------|----|-----------|----|--|
| | NC | 1960 | A | Garage. |
| 1919 | NC | 1940 | A | 1-story gable-roofed house, included for visual continuity. |
| 1923 | NC | 1936 | A | 1-story gable-roofed house with dormer, included for visual continuity. |
| | NC | 1936 | A | Companion garage. |
| 1925 | C | 1780 | A | Joseph Plumb House. Colonial shingled 5-bay central-chimney house with Federal doorway and picture window. |
| | NC | early 20C | V | Garage. |
| 1930 | NC | 1951 | A | Gable-roofed frame house. |
| 1934 | NC | 1963 | A | Gable-roofed frame house. |
| 1940 | NC | 1949 | A | 1-story weathered-shingle house. |
| | NC | 1976 | A | Shed. |
| 1944 | C | c. 1845 | SC | Nichols-Fairchild House. Greek Revival/Vernacular house with Italianate wrap-around porch. South section, which is post-and-beam construction, was moved to this location. |
| | NC | 20C | V | Garage. |

Priscilla Place

| | | | | |
|------------|----|-------|-------|---|
| 5 | C | 1910 | A | Bungalow with porch now enclosed. |
| | C | 1910 | A | Companion garage. |
| 16 | C | 1916 | A | 4-bay 20th-century Greek Revival house with pedimented portico. |
| | C | 1920s | Owner | Companion garage. |
| parcel 167 | NC | | | Vacant land. |

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Priscilla Place (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|-------|----|------|--------|--|
| 23 | C | 1920 | plaque | Nichols School. W. H. McLean, architect. Colonial Revival/Spanish Colonial Revival buff brick structure with red tile roof and lantern. Renovated in 1985 for use as Trumbull Senior Center by Design Collaborative Architects. (Photograph 4) |
| 26 | C | 1916 | A | American Four-Square shingled house with wrap-around porch. |
| | C | 1916 | A | Companion pyramidal-roofed garage. |
| 32-34 | C | 1800 | A | Colonial shingled house with screened porch and other alterations. Is half a house moved here in 1920s from Huntington Tpke. Garage. |
| | NC | | | |

Shelton Road

| | | | | |
|----|----|--------------------|---------|---|
| 30 | NC | 1959 | A | Brick-and-frame gable-roofed house. |
| 38 | C | c. 1860 | SC | Square Italianate house with rectangular monitor. May be Greek Revival house with Italianate alterations. (Photograph 12) |
| | NC | | | Garage. |
| | C | 19C | V | Barn. |
| | C | 19C | V | Shed. |
| 60 | C | c. 1835 c. 1865 | SC V | Lorenzo Nichols House. Greek Revival/Italianate house with broad roof overhang. |
| | NC | 1938 | A | Barn. |
| | NC | 1938 | A | Shed. |
| | NC | 1938 | A | Shed. |
| 74 | C | 1800 | A | Federal/Vernacular house with semi-elliptical window in gable end toward street, and late 19th-century wrap-around porch. |

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Shelton Road (Cont.)

| | | | | |
|------------|----|-----------------|---------|---|
| | C | 1936 | | Garage. |
| 80 | C | 1932 | A | Dutch Colonial Revival house. |
| | NC | 1967 | A | Garage. |
| 85 | C | 1919 | A | Dutch Colonial Revival house. |
| | C | 1919 | A | 2-story companion garage. |
| 88 | C | 1931 | A | Frame Tudor Revival house. |
| | C | 1931 | A | Companion garage |
| parcel 174 | NC | | | 0.1 acre vacant land. |
| 91 | NC | 1984 | A | Modern house. |
| 97 | NC | 1960 | A | 1-story frame house with attached garage. (Photograph 17) |
| parcel 56 | NC | 1938 | plaque | Colonial Revival Firehouse. David N. Plumb, architect. Brick with white trim. Lantern. On site of earlier school. (Photograph 18) |
| | NC | 1981 | A | Shed. |
| 110-112 | C | 1825 c. 1845 | A SC | Greek Revival/Italianate double house with eared architraves in the exterior window surrounds and Italianate wrap-around porch. |
| | C | 20C | V | Garage. |
| 111 | NC | 1953 | A | 1-story brick house. |
| 118 | C | 1928 | A | High narrow shingled Dutch Colonial Revival house. |
| | C | 1928 | A | Companion garage with attached shed. |
| parcel 153 | NC | | | Portion of vacant lot, included for visual continuity. |

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|-----------|----|---------|----|--|
| 146 | NC | 1951 | A | 1-story shingled Colonial Revival house. |
| 147 | NC | 1949 | A | 2-story Colonial Revival house. |
| 154 | C | 1846 | A | G. B. Ambler House. Square 3-bay Greek Revival house. Wide front porch supported by fluted Doric columns. Porch and main roof line surmounted by balustrades. (Photograph 9) |
| | C | 19C | V | 1½-story barn with attached shed. |
| parcel 39 | NC | | | Vacant lot included for visual continuity. |
| 157 | C | 1935 | A | Frame Tudor Revival house. |
| | C | 1935 | A | Companion garage. |
| 158 | C | 1916 | A | Colonial Revival house with 2-story "Mount Vernon" porch. |
| 169-171 | C | 1831 | A | Franklin P. Ambler House. Greek Revival house with paneled corner pilasters and rectangular windows in the frieze. Wide front porch supported by fluted Doric columns. (Photograph 10) |
| 170-172 | C | c. 1845 | SC | E. P. Nichols House. 4-bay Greek Revival house with wide front porch supported by fluted Ionic columns. 20th-century added side porch has slender Ionic columns. (Photograph 11) |
| | C | 19C | V | Barn. |

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400-1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500-1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600-1699 | X architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/ |
| X 1700-1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ humanitarian |
| X 1800-1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ theater |
| X 1900- | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ invention | | ___ other (specify) |

Specific dates See Item 7

Builder/Architect

See Item 7

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The architecture of the buildings in the Nichols Farms Historic District is significant because it includes many good examples of a wide range of styles from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries that stand together in their original relationship to one another, free of intrusions. The Greek Revival-style houses are outstanding. The architecture reflects the influences of three stages of economic development, the original agricultural settlement, the 19th-century industrial activity, and the 20th-century function as a suburb of a large city. (Criterion C - Architecture)

Historical Note

Settled as a farm in the late 17th century and devoted to agriculture in the 18th century, the district developed early in the 19th century as an industrial community. By the end of the 19th century it had begun to function primarily as a suburb of Bridgeport, as it does today. The 18th- and 19th-century architecture and history of Nichols Farms, now evident in its domestic buildings and open space, are the source of the cohesiveness and significance of the district.

Abraham Nichols, son of a founder of Stratford, ventured into North Stratford in the 1680s to begin farming in the district. He did not settle there at the time, but returned a few years later with members of the Fairchild and Curtiss families to take up permanent residence. The three family names are still prominent in the district. The Town of Trumbull was split off from Stratford and incorporated in its own right in 1797. The first First Selectman was James Nichols.

In that same year, 1797, Benjamin Fairchild sold a farm of 19 acres with house and barn for £460 to John Nichols. In the deed, recorded in Stratford Land Records at volume 26, page 502, the farm is described as being "in said Stratford at a place called Nichols Farm," indicating that the name for the community was already in use at that time. The price is an indication of the productivity of the land. John Nichols and his descendants worked the land, added to it, and maintained the farm until John B. Nichols, Jr., died in 1951. Since that time the farm has been operated for the public benefit as a park by the Nichols Improvement Association. The fact that one of the farms in the community has survived as open space gives strong visual evidence of the district's history and adds to understanding of Nichols Farms' history and development.

The district has no streams with falls and therefore no waterpower for industry. Nonetheless, as early as 1784 Eben Fairchild began the manufacture of saddle trees, the wooden forms for saddles, in a venture that prospered. In 1818 a branch was established in Bridgeport. In 1825 Isaiah Peet and Franklin P. Ambler became members of the firm, and the business was bought by Ambler in 1844. The production facilities, of which no trace remains, were located north on Shelton Road just beyond the district boundary (see Beers map) but the handsome Greek Revival Ambler houses remain standing in the district.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 104 prox.

Quadrangle name Bridgeport

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See continuation sheet.

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Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary of the district is shown by dotted line on map drawn to scale of 1" = 200'. And, see continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom/Consultant, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Comm. date December 27, 1986

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 566-3005

city or town Hartford state CT

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date July 17, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 8-20-87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service**

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Carriages were made by Nichols & Son, catering to the Southern states, a business that came to an end with the Civil War. The business reorganized as Nichols, Peck & Company and specialized in carriages for Australia (see Business Directory on Beers map). From 1873 most production was carried out in Bridgeport. In the district, the factory was located on Center Street.

Architecture - Criterion C

While many houses in the Nichols Farms Historic District are good examples of their types, especially several of the Greek Revival structures, the architectural significance of the district arises more from the breadth and range of the styles than from the exceptionally high quality of the work. The only famous architect associated with the district's 19th-century structures is Alexander Jackson Davis, and his church burned. Nonetheless, the range of styles, the state of preservation, and the absence of major intrusions collectively impart a substantial degree of architectural significance to the district. The absence of intrusions, which permits the houses to be observed and appreciated in substantially their original relationship to one another, is especially important.

During the period of Nichols Farms settlement, 5-bay central-chimney central-entrance Colonial houses commonly were built. 1832 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 6), possibly the oldest house in the district, fits this norm, with added front and side porches. The 2-1-2 rhythm of the windows in the front elevation contributes to its sense of age. 1681 Huntington Turnpike and 1810 Huntington Turnpike are additional examples in the style. These houses usually had a basic 5-room plan around the massive central chimney and were built as farmhouses. A derivative of the first houses was the twin-chimney plan, found in the district at 1837 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 7) in a 4-bay example. Its portico has a shed roof, a feature repeated in houses built in later years.

The Greek Revival and Italianate styles were in vogue during the district's period of 19th-century industrial development and prosperity. Fine houses in these styles collectively form the district's most architecturally significant resource. The 3-bay Greek Revival house at 1705 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 5) combines Doric columns with a shed roof in its portico. Three houses close to one another on Shelton Road are graced with classical tetrastyle porches. They are 154 Shelton Road (Photograph 9), 169-171 Shelton Road (Photograph 10), and 170-172 Shelton Road (Photograph 11). The classical balustrades of the porch and main roof of 154 Shelton Road make it unique in Nichols Farms.

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The low hipped roofs of several Greek Revival houses were carried over into the later Italianate style. In addition to the Sheldon Road cluster, the Greek Revival houses at 23 Center Road (Photograph 15) and 1918 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 8) have this feature. 1918 Huntington Turnpike further suggests the Italianate by its roof monitor. At 38 Shelton Road (Photograph 12) a larger monitor and paneled porch posts supported by pedestals clearly announce the Italianate style. Other typical combinations of Italianate features are present at 1713 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 5 - bracketed roof overhang and arcaded wrap-around porch) and 1773 Huntington Turnpike (hipped roof and wrap-around porch).

In Nichols Farms, as elsewhere, houses tended to change over time, with the alterations sometimes taking on architectural significance in their own right. Three examples of significant changes through additions of Queen Anne features are worth mention. 1727 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 1) has the bracketed roof overhang of the Italianate style with a wrap-around porch of turned wooden components, made possible by the technology that supported the Queen Anne style. At 1745 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 1) the original Greek Revival house was enlarged by the addition of an apsidal bay covered with imbricated shingles. The shape of the apsidal roof is dependent upon know-how associated with the balloon frame, a shape that was entirely out of the question in the post-and-beam construction of Greek Revival and earlier houses. The house at 1918 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 8), impressively sited above and back from the road, is a strong statement of the Greek Revival style, yet seems graciously to accept a 5-sided bay covered with imbricated shingles of the Queen Anne mode.

The final 19th-century style represented in the district is the Queen Anne. The house at 1896 Huntington Turnpike (Photograph 8) is characteristic of the style. Its high main roof, large round tower with conical roof, gables, and imbricated shingles all bespeak the Queen Anne.

Houses often were moved during the 19th century. The question of how many houses in the district have been moved at one time or another is unanswered, but one, 1944 Huntington Turnpike, is known to have an addition that was moved to the site. The addition is post-and-beam mortise-and-tenon construction, probably older than the Italianate structure to which it was attached. 1734 Huntington Turnpike was close to the road, as shown on the Beers map, but was moved back to its present location decades ago.

Construction in the district continued into the 20th century when, after industry declined, the community began to function as a suburb of nearby Bridgeport. Good examples of 20th-century architectural styles are found at 5 Priscilla Place, Bungalow; 26 Priscilla Place, American Four-square; 1708 Huntington Turnpike, fanciful Colonial Revival (Photograph 1); 1708 Huntington Turnpike, 80 Shelton Road, and 85 Shelton Road, Dutch Colonial Revival; and 1698 Huntington Turnpike, Tudor Revival/Cotswold. The last is a well-designed house and garage that enjoys fine integrity.

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In addition to considering the styles represented in the district, it is useful to note the styles that are missing, whose absence tells something about the history of the district. There are no houses in Nichols Farms in the Stick Style or Shingle Style. These styles were in high fashion toward the end of the 19th century after the manufacture of saddle trees and carriages had declined and there no longer was encomic growth in Nichols Farms to support construction of fine new houses in the latest fashion.

Also missing from the district is any remnant of its 19th-century industrial architecture, at least some of which was in stone, a different material from other buildings. The machine shop at 15 Center Road (Photograph 15), however, does have an industrial function, the only building in the district now to do so, and is, therefore, important as a reminder of the force that fueled the district's years of greatest growth and development.

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Boundary Justification

The district is bounded on the south by contributing properties closest to the Merritt Parkway, which is an unmistakable physical and visual barrier. On the west the boundary is the western lot lines of Nichols School and contributing property on Priscilla Place, then the western lot lines of properties fronting Huntington Turnpike to Unity Road. At Unity Road the boundary turns west to encompass the John Nichols farm, the last of the open farm spaces left in Nichols Farms. North of the farm the boundary resumes following the western lot lines of properties fronting on Huntington Turnpike to Old Dairy Road. Old Dairy Road is the entrance to a modern development, and is omitted by having the boundary jog east to Huntington Turnpike for the purpose. The boundary then resumes following the western lot lines of properties fronting on Huntington Turnpike until reaching 1925 and 1944 Huntington Turnpike. Five non-contributing resources are included to permit the boundary to include 1925 and 1944 Huntington Turnpike since these two resources are contributing and are considered important to the district. Certain additional resources to the north also would be contributing if they could be included, but the proportion of non-contributing to contributing resources is too high for further northward extension of the boundary.

The boundary then turns to the southeast following the rear lot lines of properties fronting Huntington Turnpike to 169-171 and 170-172 Shelton Road. These two Greek Revival houses are at the top of a rise and mark a visual stopping point in the district as it extends northward along Shelton Road. Certain additional resources to the north also would be contributing if they could be included, but the proportion of non-contributing to contributing resources is too high for further northward extension of the boundary. Seven non-contributing resources are included in order to bring the boundary this far north on Shelton Road. The boundary then continues southward along the rear lot lines of properties fronting on Shelton Road and Huntington Turnpike to point of beginning.

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| A 18/654000/4567700 | K 18/653940/4566930 |
| B 18/654020/4567600 | L 18/653440/4566830 |
| C 18/654420/4567400 | M 18/653420/4566930 |
| D 18/654070/4566860 | N 18/653490/4566970 |
| E 18/654070/4566710 | O 18/653460/4567320 |
| F 18/654020/4566710 | P 18/653960/4567150 |
| G 18/654020/4566650 | Q 18/153920/4567620 |
| H 18/653870/4566640 | R 18/653950/4567630 |
| I 18/654850/4566770 | S 18/653940/4567680 |
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